



Housing Authority of the City of Alameda

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MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING OF THE HOUSING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF ALAMEDA WEDNESDAY, November 16, 2011

The Commission was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chair Pratt.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

1. ROLL CALL

Present: Commissioners Smith, Pratt, Jones, Allen, and Rickard

Absent: Chair Kurrasch

2. CONSENT CALENDAR

Commissioner Rickard moved acceptance of the Consent Calendar Commissioner Smith seconded. Motion carried unanimously. All items accepted or adopted are indicated with an asterisk.

*2-A. Minutes of the Housing Commission Regular Meeting held October 19, 2011. Staff recommends acceptance with corrections to the roll call.

*2-B. Budget Variance Report. For information only.

*2-C. Quarterly Investment Report

3. AGENDA

3-A. Recommend ~~Board~~ Housing Commission Accept Audit of Financial Statements for Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2011.

Mr. Rowe, the Housing Authority Auditor, explained the audit findings. Mr. Rowe found that there were errors involving the calculation of individual Housing Assistance Payments (HAP). Mr. Rowe stated that Housing Authority should go back and look at previous calculations to see if they were done correctly for all the tenants. Mr. Rowe also recommended that the Housing Authority implement revised quality control procedures which establish a review process to have someone review, on a test basis, the HAP and that this person should be someone other than the employee who does the original HAP calculations. Mr. Rowe stated that Mr. Pucci agreed with his findings. The Chair invited comments on Mr. Rowe's audit findings. A Commissioner asked what is the difference owed to tenants. Mr. Rowe stated that the range is from \$2 up to \$131 per month. Mr. Pucci stated that we caught the error early and the tenant has been reimbursed. A Commissioner asked is it possible if some people did not get reimbursed because they left Section 8. Mr. Pucci stated that there would be an annual re-exam and errors would be caught at that time. Mr. Rowe stated that in previous fiscal years this has not been a problem. Mr. Pucci stated it happened because of change in payment standards. Mr. Rowe stated that any time a housing authority lowers their payment standards, he finds this problem, that it complicates the calculation. When doing the recertification we must remember that there was a payment reduction and carry that forward. He also recommends that anytime that you change your utility allowance that the Housing Specialist or whoever does re-exams, be given that new utility allowance amount at least a couple of months ahead of time so that they are aware of the change. A Commissioner asked if we have new procedures in place. Mr. Pucci replied that we do have new procedures in place for implementing utility allowances like our auditor has recommended though we are still



in compliance with HUD regulations. We will be introducing those new utility allowances so that Housing Specialist will be able to catch up sooner and implement them in a more accurate manner. We also have more quality control. We have a middle manager that will be reviewing the files on a monthly basis and checking to see that the proper utility allowance and payment standards are used in the calculations. Commissioner Jones asked if this recommendation is considered an opinion letter. Mr. Rowe said it could be looked at that way and that it is his opinion that these things need to be implemented to improve controls over HAP calculations so that these types of errors don't occur in the future. Commissioner Jones asked about internal controls that are not in compliance. Mr. Rowe stated that based on the payment standards being changed and utility allowance being given to the Housing Specialist at the moment the utility allowance is changed were two flaws that we had in our system and that is what caused these problems. Commissioner Jones asked Mr. Rowe with this in mind does he determine this qualified. Mr. Rowe reviewed pages 27 and 28 of the Annual Financial Report which addresses compliance. Mr. Rowe stated that in his opinion this is a significant deficiency.

Commissioner Rickard moved acceptance of staff recommendation that the Housing Commission recommend the Board of Commissioners accept the Audit Report for the Year Ending June 30, 2011. Commissioner Jones seconded.

- 3-B. Affordable Housing Education and Outreach Campaign – Mr. Pucci stated that earlier this year the City Council approved in the CDBG budget funds to develop an Affordable Housing Education Outreach Campaign in conjunction with Alameda Development Corporation (ADC). ADC retained Fenton Associates. Mr. Pucci asked members of ADC that were in the audience to stand up and identify themselves and also Eric Antebi from Fenton Associates. Helen Sause from ADC introduced, Dianne Lichtenstein and Rachel Silver. Ms. Sause stated that ADC has worked on housing in many different capacities. Ms. Sause stated that in the beginning ADC wondered if an educational program was something that was really in need and something that we could really benefit from. After discussing with some in decision rolls ADC concluded that an educational program is certainly something needed to win the support of housing on an ongoing basis. ADC was impressed with the community educational process that Fenton had prepared for Marin and realized that a similar process could be appropriate for Alameda and it could help assist us in developing community support for housing. Ms. Sause expressed appreciation to the Housing Authority and the City for showing an interest in the process and stated that she appreciates the opportunity to work with Eric Antebi. Ms. Sause introduced Mr. Antebi to guide us through a presentation. Mr. Antebi, an Alameda resident, thanked the Housing Commission for having him and said that as a resident he has a personal stake in the outcome of what the Commission does, so if he can be helpful in that process it would be a real honor. He stated that his job is to help government agencies and business that are interested in social change, to achieve that social change in a faster, more effective way. Mr. Antebi proceeded with his Housing Commission Active Idea Presentation which included goals, findings, and methodology. Mr. Antebi concluded by saying that studies show that housing stability is linked to educational success. We should be trying to get realtors to raise scholarships for high school seniors that live in affordable housing. A record amount of people came out to help raise money for the Boys and Girls Club. Mr. Antebi invited questions. A Commissioner said that we should go out with an educational campaign that addresses affordable housing and this should be the overall arching message. Mr. Pucci stated that we want broad community support throughout the neighborhood through businesses, so let's get out there to make sure it's done right. Mr. Antebi stated that there are already two projects out there, the Islander Motel and Jack Capon Villa. Normally we would treat them as normal housing projects, but there is an opportunity with both of these projects to brand them as home team projects and celebrate them and bring people together. This is a good opportunity to do communications and outreach around these projects under the umbrella of Alameda Home Team. A Commissioner asked how Mr. Antebi planned on doing this campaign. Mr. Antebi stated that where we go from here is one of the things that we decide is the next step. The Commission needs to decide that this is something conceptually that the Commission is comfortable with. In terms of how it will be implemented, there are a lot of people already out there who support



this kind of work and they become our initial coalition/advisory board. With respect to Islander Motel and Jack Capon projects, we would be able to do very specific things such as ribbon cutting events or some type of celebration at key milestones. We could have mini campaigns to help as many people in the community to feel part of the celebration. As more resources and opportunity are available we could do scholarships, etc. A Commissioner requested a copy of the presentation and asked if staff time from the Housing Authority would be needed to work with this project. Ms. Potter said that she thought that Housing Authority would naturally be part of the Alameda Home Team alongside other community organizations to move the education piece forward. She stated that we would be seeking support from the community as well as organizing celebrations and accomplishments. She stated that the Housing Authority has taken the lead on this campaign. We have our Five-year Work Plan for affordable housing and this is really a piece of that five-year strategy. The Housing Authority sees this as a compliment to our affordable housing strategy and that this is an ongoing effort. The Housing Authority will provide funding to get the project off the ground, but we do hope at some time that the community organizations will also provide support. No additional staff will be required. We will need to refocus/reframe. One Commissioner stated that over time less staff time will be needed as more community organizations buy into the project and the project becomes self-supporting. Conceptually the Commission likes the idea, but has concern about the dollars involved. Ms. Potter requested that stakeholders in the audience chime in. Lori Chavez, of Renewed Hope, stated that they have been advocates of affordable housing and certified housing development for a long time. She stated that this effort is fabulous because the hardest nut to crack is people's attitudes about affordable housing. If people care about families they should care about affordable housing. Work force housing for families is also good so they don't have to live in far out locations. Ms. Chavez is in favor of Mr. Antebi's idea about getting the stories from families. Vicki Smith has an office next to the Boys and Girls Club. She has helped between 100-125 AUSD children that are still homeless due to Harbor Island. She may have an idea of how many total homeless people in Alameda. Median priced homes are no longer affordable for a large percent of families in the Bay Area. Marilyn Ashcraft, Planning Board President, took the floor and said that she sat in on one of the focus groups and thought Mr. Antebi did a wonderful job. She said that this would help when the Planning Board does its first workshop on updating the Housing Element which will be December 12th. She said that this type of campaign in the community could only help generate conversations on helping families. It helps to break down the us vs. them mentality. Ms. Ashcraft had a question about the logo "homes are the heart of Alameda" – Something about the term is associated with Sun Cal and wondered if the incident is far enough in the past not to cause problems. Mr. Antebi said that it doesn't have to be hashed out here, but it is something we should think about as we move forward. Ms. Ashcraft also asked how we would maintain privacy in the story telling. Mr. Antebi said that it would be up to the story teller. Ms. Ashcraft applauded Mr. Antebi's efforts and invited him to come to Planning Board Meeting. Mr. Antebi told how the final idea came to him while out with his kids at the Webster Street Jam, at home in Alameda. Someone from the audience asked about the timeline. Ms. Potter stated that the first phase was to present to the Housing Commission and the stakeholders that are present and get feedback about the theme, the strategy, and ways of implementation and then work with ADC to see what the second phase, the implementation phase, would look like.

- 3-C. Quarterly Police Report – Mr. Pucci reviewed the crime and arrest report. He stated that crime is up slightly, however, there are no serious crime incidents. Mr. Pucci introduced Officer Koby Burns who has been with the Housing Authority for a couple of months. Mr. Burns stated that Housing Authority calls are down.

4. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Pucci commented that Section 8 Admin Fees have been cut down to 77%, we were at 83% and we were just keeping our heads above water. It will be difficult. This will go into effect January 1, 2012. No regulatory relief will be given; the same work will be required. HOME will be cut by almost 50%. We are not sure yet what this will look like. CDBG got cut by approx. \$300,000,000. This amount is being set aside for



catastrophe. For HOME and CDBG it will be effective July 1, 2012. It still has to be voted on. Vote will come up soon, there have been extenders and continuing resolutions.

The Commission agreed to cancel the December 21, 2011 Meeting because it is too close to Christmas and possibly have a meeting on December 14. The only item so far is business/contractual - pull cords for Independence Plaza. We may be able to wait on this item, however, it needs to be approved by the Board in January. We may do an Off-Agenda to the Commission instead.

Mr. Torrey stated that Berkeley Resources Committee is having a ceremony for the grand opening of an affordable housing complex.

- 5. COMMISSIONER COMMUNICATIONS - Commissioner Jones commented that he got a lot of information at the November PSWRC/NAHRO Seminar in Rancho Mirage and learned a lot and will be discussing this with Mr. Pucci.
- 6. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further discussion, Chair Pratt adjourned the meeting at 8:30 p.m.

Joy Pratt, Chair

Attest:

Michael T. Pucci
Executive Director / Secretary

